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Social classes exist in America even though most Americans would rather not discuss the subject. The important and often vast differences in attitudes held by members of different social classes must be taken into account in curriculum planning at the elementary and secondary educational levels.

These attitudes affect all aspects of the educational program. Representative topics covered are attitudes of the family; class personality differences and the school program; class differences in levels of aspiration and education; class attitudes, discipline, and the guidance program; class attitudes as they affect school administration, the teacher, and pupil evaluation; attitudes toward tests, reading, work, and recreation; attitudes and the curriculum in general; participation in school activities; and differences in prejudice and aggression. The school can and should play a reconciling role as well as an educational one between the classes.

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DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES OF SOCIAL CLASSES: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

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Prepared by

Melvin E. Wolford

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DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES OF SOCIAL CLASSES: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Prepared by

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Introduction

One of the characteristics of the class system in America is that Americans do not like to talk about it, or even to admit that such a thing exists. Yet there is ample evidence that it not only exists but is a powerful and pervasive influence which is not always to the good. And it does not seem to take very deep probing to have its existence admitted, even by those of tender years.[1]

Although social discrimination in America has international implications, it is not necessary to look far to find reasons for studying it. The present need is to recognize the nearby realities of our present social stratification, especially the tendency for more rigidity yet the continued espousal of mobility, and the low esteem accorded the lower classes and their not being able to feel secure and dignified. This is causing increasing social maladjustments, such as juvenile delinquency and mental illnesses, according to one author.[2] Not only are some of the results of social discrimination readily discernable, but more subtle and pervasive effects are found with further study. This leads to the realization that changes are needed and that education will play a vital role in such changes.

The need for the study of the class system implies the need for understanding the community so the school can better play its part of both serving it and of trying to change it. This also implies that knowing the community will help the teacher know his children, as they are products of their community and much of what they have learned has been influenced by their community. Thrasher summarizes this point:

> The meanings of the child's attitudes and acts clear only in view of the larger frameworks (Gestalts) within which they occur; but the meaning of the whole child appears only with reference to his total situation...Sociologically speaking, every community is a Gestalt for its local areas; every society is a Gestalt for its individual members.[3]

Each individual school is also a community that has a profound influence on what is learned and how it is learned. Havighurst says:

> There is a saying that children learn not what is taught, but what is "caught." Much

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[1] One author says that children have largely absorbed their class consciousness by the time they are in the fifth or sixth grade. See Packard, Vance. The Status Seekers. New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1961, p. 200.

[2] Ibid. pp. 290-291.

[3] Thrasher, Frederick M. "Social Backgrounds and Education." Readings in Educational Sociology, Edited by E. George Payne. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952, p. 316.

> of what is caught (attitudes toward learning, toward authority, values of right and wrong, and so on) comes not from the formal curriculum but from the pervading culture of the school.[4]

It is anticipated that various benefits will accrue to education from a better understanding of the social class system. Janke believes that some of them will be "more intelligent judgments in curriculum planning, individual diagnosis, and evaluation."[5] Another list of advantages included: (1) Increased sensitivity to lower class children, (2) More realism about social mobility, (3) Greater gearing of content to all classes of society, and (4) Improved school atmosphere for all with more equality of opportunity.[6]

Identification of Social Classes in American Society

There have been several scales developed for determining the class of society of any individual. Factors evaluated to determine the class include: amount and source of income, occupation, racial and ethnic background, community participation, place and type of residence, and amount of education. Some believe that the last item is the most important determinant of class.[7] There is solid indication that values and attitudes also sharply distinguish between the classes, but these are not as amenable to scaling as the more objective criteria of materialistic factors.

The number of classes in America is moot, but several studies have agreed that five can be easily and practically defined.[8] The most common denominator in describing these is educational and occupational status with the following usually pertaining:

Class I, Upper: Inherited wealth...graduates from college, often Ivy League...prominent politicians...very successful professionals... top executives. (2 per cent of the population)

Class II, Lower-Upper: College graduates...newly acquired wealth...professionals...businessmen (6 per cent of the population)

Class III, Middle: Small businessmen...lesser professionals...some white collar...some skilled workers (37 per cent of the population)

Class IV, Lower: Semi-skilled workers...high school graduates... (43 per cent of the population, the largest class)

Class V, Lowest: Semi-skilled workers...high school graduates... (43 per cent of the population, the largest class)

Class V, Lowest: Unskilled work...high school drop-outs...slum dwellers (12 per cent of the population)[9]

Although many authors use these five classes, there are some who just use the three of upper, middle, and lower. This paper will recognize the five divisions wherever practical, but will use

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[4]Havighurst, Robert J. and Neugarten, Bernice L. Society and Education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1957, p. 185.

[5]Janke, Leota L. and Havighurst, Robert J. "Relations Between Ability and Social Status in a Midwestern Community." Educational Psychology, Edited by Arthur P. Coladarci. New York: The Dryden Press, 1955, p. 300.

[6]Rich, John M. "How Social Class Values Affect Teacher-Pupil Relations." Journal of Educational Sociology, (September, 1950) 77: 359.

[7]Packard, Op. Cit., is one who holds this position. He avers that the sharpest class differences are between the college graduates and those who are not.

[8]Ibid., pp. 25-27.

[9]This is a combination of several descriptions, notably Tyler, Leona E. The Psychology of Human Differences, Second Edition. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1956, p. 312.

only three if the specific factor under consideration does not distinguish the five classes.

Effect of Attitudes on Educational Planning

The format will be to consider specific attitudes and characteristics and to mention implications for education. Several points need to be made by way of introduction: (1) It is recognized that the attitudes are not discrete and that there is much overlapping and interrelationships. (2) There is much overlapping of attitudes among different classes so many of the points will be only generalizations with individual exceptions common. (3) The attitudes and values will vary in different communities and schools. (4) Although an effort was made to only consider attitudes, this was not always done as other factors seem to impinge on them -- for example, personality and family influences. (5) Students are well aware of social classes and their position in them and the class structure figures very prominently in their school life.[10]

Attitudes of the Family.

Both family class attitudes in general and specific family attitudes toward education must be recognized as they are closely interrelated. The basic point to be remembered is that the attitudes of the family are related to their problems. Because the different classes have to solve widely different problems, the classes show widely divergent attitudes. The problems of the lower classes tend to be short-range and basic, like getting enough food and paying the rent. The upper class problems are more long-range like assuring the continuation of their business and social position which often includes planning for college. These differences help explain the increased conservatism as the class scale is ascended.[11]

Turning to specific class attitudes, the upper and middle classes believe that such attitudes and characteristics as self-reliance, good manners, cleanliness, respect for authority and property, self-control, and curiosity need to be developed.[12] This is in contrast to the lower classes which think that the above values are, in the main, unimportant or impractical.[13]

There are some who distinguish not only the values held, but also the degree to which they are held. For example, they feel that honesty is a generalized virtue for the upper classes who feel that it is the best policy for everyone, while the lower classes believe that it is a good policy only for friends and neighbors.[14] The same principle is applied to respect for property, as the lower class children are said to respect only the property of their family or their group and that respecting the property of the school is outside their own and their family's experience.[15]

Although the implications for the schools of these family attitudes are quite obvious, the point

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[10]This was a common finding, but developed to some length by Centers, Richard. "Social Class Identification of American Youth." Journal of Personality (March, 1950) 18:291.

[11]Packard, Op. Cit., p. 184.

[12]Havighurst, Robert J. and Taba, Hilda. Adolescent Character and Personality. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1957, p. 32.

[13]Rich, Op. Cit., p. 356.

[14]Havighurst and Taba, Loc. Cit.

[15]Brookover, Wilbur B. A Sociology of Education. New York: American Book Company, 1955, p. 321.

to be made is that the implications should be incorporated somewhere into the curriculum. The upper and middle class children need to have their compulsion for conformity, cleanliness, and respect for property jarred--at least a little--while the lower class children need to generalize their values to include the whole of society, not just their own segment. This assumes another basic point which is that the schools and the teachers need to be aware that differences exist and also need to be knowledgeable as to what they are so that appropriate changes can be attempted or so the needs of the particular group of pupils can be met.

Two quotations summarize the attitudes of the family toward education.

> As he [the child] enters the classroom he is...the product of his family's training; and he has behind him a long social history. While the school will wield a tremendous influence upon him, and will change his behavior in numerous and important ways, the school operates, never singly, but always in some kind of relation to the family.[16]

This author continues later:

> The school...must be seen as one whose influence is carried out always in relation to, and in the framework of, the influence of the family. In some cases, the goals of the school will be the same as the goals of the family; in other cases they will be different. While this variability poses many problems for the American school system, it also poses one of its greatest challenges.[17]

As something of an oversimplification it may be said that the upper classes view public education as a means to get their children into good private schools and colleges; the middle classes view public education as the key to success in life; while the lower classes view public education as a good idea, at least through high school, if it is not too inconvenient.[18]

The upper and middle class attitudes are similar as both classes believe in education. What difference there is is often a matter of the kind of education desired. This segment of society encourages respect for authority and conformity to school rules, almost compulsively so, at least by the middle class.[19] Both by precept and example does this class encourage good work in school.

The lower classes present a different picture as the solutions to many of their problems are not found in either the schools or in books. Havighurst listed several characteristic attitudes of this class: (1) Placing little value on school performance or on conforming to school expectations, (2) Feeling that academic excellence is "queer" and will alenate the child from his family and friends, (3) Often expressing dissatisfaction with schools, and (4) (The lower-lower class)--tending to regard education with skepticism and to view the school and its methods as being either contrary to its own values or of little worth.[20] Another author states that other common lower class attitudes are that the school represents a needless financial drain, and that the parents do not

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[16]Havighurst and Neugarten, Op. Cit., p. 96.

[17]Ibid., p. 104.

[18]This is generally found, but elucidated quite well by Coleman, James S. The Adolescent Society. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961, pp. 66-68.

[19]Stendler, Celia B. "Values and Class." Education in Society: Readings. Edited by Bernard M. Meltzer, Henry R. Doby and Phillip M. Smith. New York: Thomas J. Crowell Company, 1958, p. 352.

[20]Havighurst and Neugarten, Op. Cit., pp. 99-100.

appreciate what the school is doing or what the child can gain from it. However, the picture is not altogether black as this author recognizes that some see the school as a place to learn a vocation and that "some of these parents have a blind, almost pathetic, faith that education will enable their children to gain something from life that was denied to them."[21]

The wide variation in class attitudes presents the schools with challenges which need to be met. Although the values of the upper and middle classes generally coincide with those of the school there is still the danger that their influence will be so dominant that other classes will be discriminated against.

The lower classes seem to be quite badly out-of-step with the schools. On the one hand there is the idealistic minority who expect too much from the school, while on the other hand are the many who expect too little from it. This problem of the family's attitude is not accessible to the school's influence, unfortunately, but several suggestions seem in order. One is that the parents be encouraged somehow to find out what the school is doing. The second is to try to convince the lower class child that the school has something for him. This is only partially a function of guidance; it is mostly a function of curriculum planning to insure that the school does really have something for him. The implication, which will be supported later, is that too often the school does not have much for the lower class child, a weakness that exists in many areas of the school program.

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[21]Hollingshead, August B. Elmtown's Youth. New York: Science Editions, Inc., 1961, p. 177.

Class Personality Differences and the School Program

An effort will be made to include only those personality differences which affect the school program. It must be admitted, however, that almost any class personality characteristic affects the school program and the child's learning.

Although significant differences in class personalities have been uncovered, it should be remembered that there is wide variation within each class, and considerable overlapping between or among classes.[22] However, there is creditable evidence that each social class has quite an heterogeneous personality pattern. Robert J. Havighurst, summarizes as follows:

> A social class is probably not just a random sample of the total population of a society, with respect to basic personality structure. It shows systematic differences from other social classes of such a significance that one might find, for example, 50 per cent of one class sharing a basic personality configuration, and not more than 35 per cent of another class sharing this same configuration.[23]

Focusing attention on the personality common to the upper classes reveals that there is general agreement that they are more emotionally stable and dominant than others.[24] There is also common agreement that the upper class students are concerned with "being" as they are oriented to ascribed rather than achieved values.[25] There is also indication that their interests tend to be

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[22]Tyler, Leona, Op. Cit., p. 335.

[23]Havighurst, Robert J. "Social Class and Personality Structure." Sociology and Social Research, (July-August, 1952), p. 362.

[24]Two who say this are Leona Tyler, Loc. Cit., and Gough, Harrison G. "A New Dimension of Status: I. Development of a Personality Scale." American Sociological Review, (August, 1948), p. 401.

[25]Packard, Op. Cit., p. 199, and McArthur, Charles. "Sub-Culture and Personality During the College Years." Journal of Educational Research, (February, 1960). 53:262.

intellectual, social, and aesthetic.[26] Probably the word most commonly used to describe the middle class is "conformity," with "anxious" coming close behind.[27] Coupled with these is the fact that this class often is inhibited, but has a strong drive for "doing" and achieving.[28]

Descriptions of the personality characteristics of the lower cla ses are often quite polarized with aggression and lack of inhibitions on the one end and apathy on the other. Havighurst summarized this when he described the three types of lower class personality: (1) The aggressive, impulsive, who easily give vent to their feelings, (2) The intimidated who are apprehensive of life and are generally apathetic, and (3) Those who have found acceptable expression, do well in school, and are upwardly mobile.[29] A study of immigrants is worth citing as they usually start in the lower classes and cause schools some vexing and unique problems. They are often found to be insecure; this they combate by organizing the entire family to make money which often is either saved or invested.[30]

While it is questionable that much personality change is possible, yet the attitudes revealed by the class characteristics certainly could be improved. It is suggested that the teacher could emphasize personal accomplishment and responsibility to the upper class children who are relying on what their family has done for them. The anxious striving for achievement and conformity would be alleviated, if possible, in the minds and lives of the middle class children. For the lower class, giving hope to the apathetic and guidance to the aggressive would be in order. Clearly this is a formidable task which should challenge the teacher, not only because of its magnitude, but also because of the necessity. This is made doubly difficult because the teacher is attacking what each class holds dear and what each class has found to be effective for accomplishing its aims. To bring about not a revolution, but a lessening of emphasis, is the goal to be sought. The benefits will be not only increasing the effectiveness of the individual student(and maybe reclaiming a few!), but also in bringing the attitudes of the classes closer together through increased understanding, which also tends to decrease friction.

Class Differences in Level of Aspiration and Education

As has been stated previously, generally speaking, the upper classes aspire to have their children qualify for the best private schools and colleges, the middle classes want their children to go to, and possibly graduate from, some college, while the lower classes think it would be "nice" if their children were to graduate from high school. The levels of aspirations also have a temporal quality as the upper classes' aspirations are long-range while the lower classes' aspirations are short-range or immediate. Coupled with this is the value placed on thrift and hard work and the possibility for advancement by the upper classes in contrast to the lower classes

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[26]McArthur, Loc. Cit., and Torgoff, Irving. "Personality and Social Development: Social Influences: Social Class and Ethnic Backgrounds." Review of Educational Research (December, 1961), 31:478.

[27]Havighurst, Op. Cit., p. 358, and Tyler, Loc. Cit., agree on this.

[28]Two who say this are McArthur, Loc. Cit., and Packard, Op. Cit., pp. 196-197.

[29]Havighurst, Op. Cit., p. 360.

[30]Warner, W. Lloyd and Srole, Leo. The Social [illegible] Groups. New Haven:

who often want "an easy job" that is secure.[31]

The authors who wrote about this factor seemed to be primarily interested in the lower classes, perhaps because the upper classes' level is adequately high. This is an area where there seems to be a distinction between class IV and class V levels. Although some students in class IV are ambitious, want good grades, and plan to go to college, in the main they are content to drift through high school, than get married or go to work. The class V students are little concerned whether they pass or fail and their main ambition is to leave the school as soon as possible.[32] Many do just that as indicated by the high drop out rate for this class.[33] This level of aspiration is deeper than low intelligence level or lack of finances as it is estimated that only half of the class IV and V boys capable of college work would go even if they had financial support.[34] Of course, finances to play a part as some families need their children to go to work as soon as possible and cannot afford to wait for them to get a college degree. The most obvious implication is the need for more and better guidance.

Class Attitudes, Discipline, and the Guidance Program

Hollingshead shows how some of the upper class children are allowed to break some of the rules with impunity while enforcement is rigid for class IV and V students.[35] Another author who studied both elementary and secondary school children found that the lower class students received a disproportionate amount of punishment in contrast to the upper class children, and the latter received more than their share of rewards.[36]

The area of guidance is another where the needs and wants of the classes are so different as to be almost diametrically opposed. The upper classes are interested in their children getting good grades and guidance--perhaps too much so, at least as far as the grades are concerned. Conant, who has much to say about this, summarized as follows: "The main problem in wealthy suburban schools is to guide the parent whose college ambitions outrun his child's abilities toward a realistic picture of the kind of college his child is suited for."[37] He goes on to say that such attitudes on the part of parents cause much misery and frustration for those upper class children who cannot do academic work of high quality.

The lower class children present a different problem for the counselor. Conant again summarized this rather well:

> The task with which the school people in the slum must struggle is, on the one hand, to prepare a student for getting and keeping a job as soon as he leaves school and, on the other hand, to encourage those who have academic talent to aim as a profession through higher education.[38]

In contrast to the upper class children who want and receive guidance, those of the lower class often do not receive any, or want any, for that matter. And what guidance they receive is often

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[31]Tyler, Op. Cit., p. 334, and Bell, Robert R. "Social Class Values and the Teacher." National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, (December, 1959), 43:126.

[32]Hollingshead, Op. Cit., pp. 177-178.

[33]Ibid., p. 358.

[34]Hollingshead, Op. Cit., p. 98.

[36]Wade, Durlyn E. "Social Class in a Teachers' College." Education in Society: Readings. Edited by Bernard M. Meltzer, Henry R. Doby, and Phillip M. Smith, New York: Thomas J. Crowell Company, 1958, p. 367.

[37]Conant, James B. Slums and Suburbs. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961, p. 1

related to discipline, not grades, despite the fact that they often are doing poor or failing work.[39]

There are several implications for guidance of the class differences mentioned above. One is to publicize the purposes of the different kinds of colleges so both the parents and the students will choose a school more on a basis of educational goals rather than social or prestige factors. Another need is for counselors and teachers to be aware of the lower class children and their needs, because often such children are either ignored or punished. There is also a general need for counselors to do what they can to see that the aspirations are backed by sound plans so the goals amount to more than just youthful dreams. The problem of the dropout is one that high school counselors and teachers (and curriculum planners) need to study more as many students leave school before graduating, including a majority of the class V students. Many times the school loses all contact with its former students after they withdraw, although obviously these students still need guidance.[40]

Class Attitudes as They Affect School Administration

There is evidence that social class greatly influences the viewpoint of the parents and children to the schools and their administration. There is also indication that the differences are quite sharply differentiated among the upper, the middle, and the lower classes. As something of a sweeping generalization, by way of introduction, the better the neighborhood, the more interest will be shown by the parents in their children's activities and progress.[41] There are, of course, exceptions by individuals and even by some areas.

As a rule the upper classes are interested in a good school and are willing to support one. They are also apt to have a part in running the school both with social pressure and by serving on school boards.[42] However, there is indication that this class pretty much holds to its own ideas as indicated by a rather interesting account where the high school was criticized by an accreditating agency. The reaction of the upper classes was that the criticism did not mean much and was rather trifling.[43] Members of this class are also prone to blame the school if the students do not do well in school and/or do not gain admittance into the desired college.[44]

The middle class is strongly committed to the public schools as they do not send their children to private schools and see the school as essential to success in life.[45] However, they are not always willing to support the school financially because they do not have enough money.[46]

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[39]Hollingshead, Op. Cit., p. 180.

[40]This was documented by Hollingshead, Ibid., p. 390.

[41]Rodehaver, Myles W.; Actell, William B.; and Gross, Richard E. The Sociology of the School. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1957, p. 74.

[42]One author found that the school board members had been from class II for years. Hollingshead, Op. Cit., p. 143.

[43]Ibid., p. 142.

[44]Conant, Op. Cit., p. 83.

[45]Havighurst and Neugarten, Op. Cit., p. 217.

[46]Hollingshead, Op. Cit., p. 144.

The lower classes present a contrast as the upper-lower classes are said to be best described as indifferent [47] while the lower-lower parents and children are generally resentful. Hollingshead attributes the indifference to the fact that only about one-fourth are educationally ambitious while the rest, and even some of the one-fourth, are too far removed from the school to be concerned about school problems.[48] There were several reasons given as to why the lower classes were resentful of the schools. One is their common belief, not without basis, that the schools are run mostly for the benefit of the upper and middle classes, and that there is nothing they can do about the "inner group."[49] Another hypothesis is that they resent having to respect the authority vested in the school which often runs counter to their desires and may cost them money in terms of taxes and school costs.[50] Bell aptly stated the causes of resentment for the lower class children when he said that they view the school as a place which restricts their interests, which is a deterrent to their ambitions, and which is a place where they have to go until they can leave to find a job.[51]

It goes without saying that the administrator of a school needs to be aware of the class of people served by the school. If he serves an upper class community, he needs to be aware of their values and to be sure that they do not exert unreasonable pressure to have the school run their way, perhaps to the detriment of the other classes, and perhaps also to the detriment of the teachers. The lower classes evidently need a lot of therapy to improve their general attitude toward the school. An effort to get the parents interested in the school is recommended, but might be largely fruitless unless their contributions and/or complaints are fairly dealt with. The school should do what it can to reduce the resentment of the lower class children. One obvious and basic improvement would be to reduce social discrimination.

Also, the curriculum should be geared as much as possible to the needs and ambitions of the students it serves. It is conceivable that the needs of the students might run counter to the ideals of the school personnel, but the curriculum should fit the child, perhaps more than the teacher, if there is a conflict.

Class Attitudes and the Teacher

Two facets of this area need to be considered: (1) The class characteristics of teachers as a group; and (2) the characteristic attitudes toward teachers held by the different social classes.

There is general agreement that teachers at virtually all levels represent the values and attitudes of the middle class. One author states that middle class values influence the teachers' methodology, illustrations, anticipated behavior, grades, rewards, and textbooks used.[52] Teachers also prefer middle class children, due in large part to the agreement of values, as they are generally eager to learn and easy to discipline which is not true of the lower class children. As

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[47] Ibid., p. 145.

[48] Ibid., p. 146-147.

[49] Ibid., p. 145.

[50] Coleman, Op. Cit., p. 67.

[51] Bell, Op. Cit., p. 123.

[52] Bell, Op. Cit., pp. 125-126.

for the upper class, the teachers typically do not feel completely at ease with them as such children and their parents are liable to expect too much from the school and the teachers, are prone to be critical, expect preferential treatment, and have considerable power which they are willing and able to use against the teachers if the need arises.[53]

Turning to class attitudes, the upper classes view of the teacher is aptly illustrated by a cartoon in which the mother says, "I can't understand why the teachers can't get along with Johnny; all the other servants can."[54] While it is very probable that the children have been influenced by this attitude of their parents, some research has revealed that they do not resent the authority of the teachers per se, but exhibited a variety of feelings depending on their experience.[55] Middle class children, their parents, and the teachers are usually mutually congenial. The middle class generally respects authority, not subserviently, but as equals.[56] They also expect to be liked or rewarded on their present merits and accomplishments, not on the past, and their attitudes are not against or for the teachers as a group, although they may have feelings about specific teachers. The lower class children find that behavior which is appropriate for their family and neighborhood is frowned on at school so they typically do not expect empathy from the teachers and often think that the teachers favor the upper and middle class children.[57] On the positive side, two authors said that teachers often find that the lower class children do not fit their stereotypes.[58] Havighurst admitted that the teachers are presently predominantly from the middle class, but he says that the trend the last few decades has been toward more heterogeneousness with significant representation in all but the extremes at the upper and lower ends of the socio-economic range.[59]

There are several implications of the predominance of middle class values on the part of teachers. Basic is that educators need to be aware of other class values and to make an effort to divorce the school from complete dominance of any one class. Specifically, the teacher probably needs to watch that her values do not become so removed from the lower class children that communication is not only difficult, but may be largely negative. One author states that an attitude by the teacher that her values are best "is fatal to the development of the full mental capacity of either the teacher or the pupil."[60] Another author makes the important point that the teachers often hold the key to mobility of their students so they need to be aware of both the values extant and also the values which are

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[53]Havighurst and Neugarten, Op. Cit., p. 102.

[54]Ibid., p. 367.

[55]Ibid., p. 149.

[56]Maas, Henry S. "The Role of Member in Clubs of Lower-Class and Middle-Class Adolescents." The Adolescent A Book of Readings, Revised Edition. Edited by Jerome M. Seidman. New York: Holt,

[57]Coleman, Loc. Cit.

[58]Conant, Op. Cit., makes this point, as well as Fisher, Robert J. "Who is this Lower Class Child?" Journal of Educational Sociology (March, 1961), 34:310.

[59]Havighurst and Neugarten, Op. Cit., pp. 339 and 360.

[60]Davis, W. Allison and Havighurst, Robert J. "The Measurement of Mental Systems." Educational Psychology, Edited by Arthur P. Coladarci. New York: The Dryden Press, 1955, p. 606.

conducive to upward mobility.[61] The obvious solution is to hire teachers with backgrounds similar to the school in which they are going to teach. Because this is practically impossible due to the far greater number of lower class classrooms than teachers, another solution would be to train the teachers to be aware of the different class values and their importance to the educational process.

Class Attitudes and Pupil Evaluation

Studies have revealed conclusively that there is a significant positive correlation between the higher classes of society and the better grades in school. Although the difference in mental capacity accounts for some of this disparity, research has revealed that ascribed as well as achieved factors influence the grading.[62] It should also be remembered that this is more of a problem in elementary and secondary schools than at the college level where the relationship between social class and achievement largely disappears.[63]

This is another area where the class attitudes are widely divergent. The upper class children feel the need for good grades for future success and are encouraged by both precept and example of their parents to strive for them. Due in part to the raising of admission standards to colleges, the parents and students are so concerned about grades that they are not above causing trouble for the teacher which may cause her to change the grades.[64]

The attitudes of the lower class children and parents are summarized by Hollingshead as follows:

> It is believed widely in classes IV and V, and to a somewhat lesser extent in class III, that the grades a student receives are determined by social position of his parents in the social structure rather than by his ability or his industriousness. This belief is not without foundation as over the years there has been a number of questionable grading practices in relation to the children of prominent families.[65]

It seems more than unfortunate that pupil evaluation, which is important both for present satisfaction and for future success, should reflect social discrimination. This situation would seem to be demoralizing to all concerned: the teacher's loss of integrity, the upper class getting unjust rewards, and the lower class not getting their just dues. Evaluation should not be subject to social pressures.

Class Attitudes and Tests

One of the best documented facts is the high correlation between class of society and score on tests in general and intelligence tests in particular. Obviously the differences reflect innate intelligence, but there is considerable evidence that they also are class oriented. For example, one study revealed that nine out of ten intelligence tests discriminated at a significant

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[61] Brookover, Op. Cit., p. 114.

[62] Parsons, Talcott. "School Class as a Social System: Some of Its Functions in American Society." Harvard Educational Review, (Fall, 1959), No. 4:299.

[63] DiVesta, Francis J. "Meaningful Learning: Motivational, Personality, Interpersonal, and Social Variables; Socio-economic Status." Review of Educational Research, (December, 1961), 31:518.

[64] Hollingshead, Op. Cit., p. 176, presents some memorable instances of such things occurring.

[65] Ibid., p. 181.

level between the different classes on half the items.[66] It should be mentioned that achievement tests do not show this social discrimination as generally as do mental tests.

The purpose of this paper is not to document class differences in tests but to indicate class attitudes that might account for this. Unfortunately, the reasons for this are not as well documented as the fact that the differences exist. One author found some class differences in test orientation as practice helped the upper class children but did not help the lower class children.[67] Hollingshead spelled out some of the class differences in attitudes toward tests as he said that the upper classes are more test oriented as they are more competitive, aggressive, strive for personal achievement and try to do their best. He says that this contrasts with the lower classes who are more used to frustration, failure, and worry and are not trained to do their best in their homes.[68]

One of the gravest educational implications is to cast some doubt on the efficacy of mental tests because they are socially biased. This is recognized by experts in the field of tests and efforts are being made to develop such a test. In the light of proven social discrimination, the teacher needs to remember this when evaluating the child's potential as revealed by an aptitude test score. The teacher could also do something toward orienting the lower class children toward tests and test items so they could at least commence the test on an equal footing with children of the other classes.

Class Attitudes Toward Reading

This is pertinent to education as reading is certainly vital to a child's success in school. The attitudes of the families, and of the children, are widely divergent among the different social classes. The upper class families encourage reading competence and set an example by reading in the home. The lower classes, in contrast, believe reading is something that is done solely in school and condemn the "book worm."[69] Conant said that teachers recognized this because those teaching in slum-area schools said over and over that much more could be done if the family's attitude toward reading could be improved.[70] The difference in class attitudes is also reflected in what is read. In general the indication is that the upper classes read for information while the lower classes read for escape.[71]

Happily, this is an area where teachers are generally aware of the class differences and are making an effort to cope with them. This is commendable, but the warning is still appropriate that the teachers may need to adjust the curriculum to the class involved as well as to modify the level if it is thought to be necessary. It is paradoxical that many teachers recognize class differences in reading, yet fight the problem

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[66] Davis, Op. Cit., p. 599.

[67] Ibid., p. 620.

[68] Hollingshead, Op. Cit., pp. 175-176.

[69] This is documented by several authors, but Havighurst and Neugarten, Op. Cit., p. 356, are more thorough than most.

[70] Conant, Op. Cit., p. 25.

[71] Hollingshead, Op. Cit., p. 307. Havighurst and Neugarten, Op. Cit., pp. 23f, have made quite extensive comparisons and illustrations of class differences in what is read.

instead of trying to utilize it. The lower class families are often the root of the difficulty so they need to be reached in some way. Perhaps greater availability of appealing night classes for adults would help.

Class Attitudes and the Curriculum in General

It is recognized that social values do much to shape the curriculum because the values held by the patrons of the school profoundly influence what classes are offered. The corollary fact to be recognized is that the curriculum should reflect the needs of the community. This preference of type of curriculum by socio-economic class has been the subject of study of several researchers with results that are similar. The differences are recognized by the teachers, the parents, and the students. In the words of one of the latter, those taking a college preparatory curriculum "rate," those who take a general curriculum are neutral, while those in the commercial curriculum "don't rate."[72] Her rating is borne out by the percentage taking the three curricula:[73]

	Social Class			
Curriculum	1 & 2	3	4	5
College Preparatory	64%	27%	9%	4%
General	36%	51%	58%	58%
Commercial	0%	21%	33%	38%

This stigma of commercial classes causes grief for some students who might take these courses but either the courses are not offered in their school (in all liklihood one in an upper class community), or parents and friends stigmatize the student if he takes such a curriculum.[74]

Although the lower classes are interested in commercial courses, as indicated by the above chart, Conant believes that more such courses should be offered, due in part to the number of lower class students who drop out of school before graduating.[75] Havighurst points out that the lower class children have also influenced the curriculum because they furnish the bulk of the "slow" students who are in remedial classes.[76]

The differences in class attitudes as to what should be in the curriculum have several implications for schools. First is the basic point that the educator needs to be aware of the class served by the school so he can inaugurate plans and changes that will be acceptable. There is also need to understand what the lower class has missed in comparison to the other classes, then provide the missing experiences in the school. There is also the need for the schools to move farther away from an emphasis on subject matter to an emphasis on the child and life.[77] The curriculum not only needs to reflect community values, but an effort should be made to fit the curriculum to community needs, even though the needs may be different than their values--for example, vocational training for some upper class students.

Class Differences in Participation in School Activities

This subject has been studied at length with

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[72]Hollingshead, Op. Cit., pp. 169-170.

[73]Brookover, Op. Cit., p. 89.

[74]Conant, Op. Cit., pp. 105, 106.

[75]Ibid., p. 45.

[76]Havighurst and Neugarten, Op. Cit., p. 24.

[77]Brookover, Op. Cit., p. 364, has an excellent chart showing the differences in curricula

the conclusion that the higher the class, the more the students participate in school activities. The magnitude of the difference is great as indicated by Coster who says, "Nearly ten times as many low income as high income pupils did not participate."[78] This was found to include many activities--for example, playing on athletic teams, attending dances, watching athletic contests, attending parties, holding student offices, responding in class, participating in musical activities, etc.[79]

Hollingshead's summation is "The class V adolescent's family background and prestige position are such that he is made to feel unwanted in the classroom, on the playground, or in the clubs and extracurricular activities which are an integral part of the school situation."[80]

The attitudes of the classes are indicated by the amount of participation. The upper classes encourage the school to have activities, enter into them, and endeavor to get elected to lead them. Not so the lower classes, as they often cannot afford them, are prone to think that they are a waste of time and money, feel that they will be discriminated against by both the teachers and students, and say that "the rich kids will hog all the offices."[81]

The implications for the school system of the dominance of the upper classes of the activity program are legion and serious. A basic point is that the schools still believe in equal opportunity, but do not practice it. The need, of course, is to see that all classes have equal opportunity. Part of this is a function of guidance, which could do much to help the student find congenial activities without social discrimination. This could conceivably mean inaugurating new activities geared to every level of the class structure of the school. Equalizing opportunity may also be provided by administrators and teachers, thus equalizing prestige and publicity of the different activities.

Class Attitudes Toward Work

Part of the disparity in participation in activities can be traced to different class attitudes toward children working. The upper classes do not need the income from the children's work, nor do they think work is as beneficial to the child as other activities, such as social functions, participating in community and school activities, or indulging in some hobby or recreational activity. The middle class has many of the same characteristics except that many feel that there is more value to be gained from work than from some of the activities mentioned above. The lower classes are the most oriented to work, perhaps from necessity as much as preference. These students often are needed to help support the family and their wages often provide the basic necessities for living; hence they are not available for such "luxuries" as school functions or recreational activities. This is one reason why missing a day of school to work often is not important to either

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[78]Coster, John K. "Some Characteristics of High School Pupils from Three Income Groups." Journal of Educational Psychology, (April, 1959), 50:59.

[79]Hollingshead, Op. Cit., pp. 195-199.

[80]Ibid., p. 358.

[81]Ibid., pp. 196-201.

the child or his parents, although it is of manifest importance to the school personnel, and definitely is a breach of rules as far as the other classes are concerned.[82] In addition to needing the money, many of the lower class students see only a faint connection between school and their life's work so they go to work doing the same thing their parents are doing, which is usually a job that takes little or no skill or training.[83]

One of the basic implications of the class differences in regard to their attitude toward work is that the lower class children are prone to go to work sooner than the others, so the school has fewer years to meet their needs. This means that the curriculum should be designed to prepare them for the work-a-day world that many of them enter at the age of sixteen or seventeen. Another implication is that the cost of activities needs to be kept minimal so that many students with little money for such purposes are able to participate in this phase of the learning process. There is also need to recognize the relative values of school attendance and working so that an effort is made to change the values on the one hand, and to perhaps mix mercy with justice on the other hand when a student chooses to work.

Class Reputations

It is rather a common procedure to use sociograms and other similar techniques to investigate the general reputations of the different classes. Such research has revealed several facts: (1) Students usually equate upper classes with a better reputation than the lower classes. (2) When choosing friends, students "over choose" upper class friends, "under choose" lower class. (3) Upper class children receive a disproportionate amount of positive responses on reputational items like "most fun" and "real leader"; these were from all classes. The lower classes received few responses of such caliber and the few they did receive were only from other lower class children. (4) Lower class children receive a disproportionate amount of negative responses alluding to reputation.[84]

The opinion by the upper classes that the lower classes are "no good," and the opinion by the lower classes that the upper classes are about the same and "sissies, to boot" evinces the need for education and understanding by each class of the other, and of all classes by the educator. There is evidence that there are some techniques that will engender such an increased understanding so the educator needs to find them and to use them.

Attitudes Toward Recreation

The class differences in their recreational activities has much to do with the reputation enjoyed by the class. The upper classes' recreational patterns usually include family activities, community agencies like the YMCA, home duties, and studies (including various kinds of lessons such as dancing and music.) The lower class child's activities usually include none of the above as they are more likely to include outdoor playing with friends, watching television, and reading

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[82]Brookover, Op. Cit., p. 95.

[83]Hollingshead, Op. Cit., p. 359.

[84]Cook, Lloyd A. "An Experimental Sociographic Study of a Stratified Tenth-Grade Class." Educational Psychology, Edited by Arthur P. Coladarci. New York: The Dryden Press, 1955, p. 315-326.

comic books.[85] The differing activities also have legal connotations as the lower class children are prone to indulge in illegal or barely legal activities which often would horrify the upper classes. Among the older children, much of the difference in reputation is because of different attitudes toward heterosexual activities. It is well known that society's sexual mores are violated much more frequently by the lower classes. Two statements succintly state the difference as follows: "Early heterosexual experience may be highly regarded in the lower-class child's peer group, but severely condemned by the middle-class group."[86] "A lower class boy who treats a girl as a lady is not respected by the girls; and he is ridiculed by the boys."[87]

These various activities puts the school into the position of competing with the family of the upper class children, and of competing with the gang of the lower class children, both of which may resent the school's interference.[88] Although the school is somewhat limited in providing the lower class children with the kinds of activities they commonly indulge in, it can and should make an effort to provide activities which might be congenial to such children because the implication exists that the schools presently are doing more to provide activities congenial to the upper class children than to lower class children. One simple technique would be to see that the recreational facilities connected with the school's physical education program be available to the students after school hours. Another implication is that the curriculum could do something to introduce the children to various activities, and to educate them about the consequences of some of their current activities.

Class Differences in Aggression

Although this is an area that affects primarily the discipline and guidance functions of the school program, it also affects the learning process for the child. The evidence is quite clear that lower class children express aggression more openly and freely in form of fighting than do the other classes who are apt to think that such expression is inappropriate or wrong.

The expression of aggression in fighting is a result of training to a large extent as lower class families teach their children that it is necessary to fight for what they want and encourage aggression. Furthermore, they tend to think that being anxious to please, or respectful is the mark of a "schemer" or an "apple polisher."[89]

This seems to be one of the few areas in which the differences are more accentuated at the elementary than at the secondary level, but the point applies to both areas. The most significant implication for the schools would seem to be the need for school personnel to recognize the forms of aggression that are part of the local milieu in coping with problems of this kind. An under-

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[85]Havighurst, Op. Cit., p. 359.

[86]Brookover, Loc. Cit.

[87]Hollingshead, Op. Cit., pp. 420-421.

[88]Brown, Francis J. Educational Sociology, Second Edition. New York: Princeton-Hall, Inc., 1954, pp. 411-413.

[89]Stendler, Op. Cit., p. 350, and Falk, Gerhard J. "Role of Social Class Differences and Horizontal Mobility in the Etiology of Aggression." Journal of Educational Sociology, (September, 1959), 33:3.

standing of this, followed by appropriate responses of the teacher, might do much to make the school more helpful to children. This does not mean that the educator should passively accept the status quo, because there is also a need for the children to understand where, when, and what kind of, aggression is appropriate.

Class Differences in Prejudice

This is an area where more study is needed as some of the findings are in direct opposition to each other. For example, one author states that the upper classes are more tolerant of racial minorities than are the lower classes.[90] However, another researcher found the opposite to be true, at least as far as Negroes and Jews are concerned.[91] His statement is:

> There is no conclusive evidence that those in the higher socio-economic strata are, in fact, less prejudiced. High status seems to exert a systematic positive effect only on some of the cruder stereotypes; on many other issues, persons of lower socio-economic status actually show less prejudice.[92]

This study also investigated the effect of education on prejudice and found some differences among the various classes.

> On some issues the effect of socio-economic status varies with the education of the respondents. Among the least educated, those of high status show lowest degree of prejudice. Among the most educated the reverse is true; those of low status show the least prejudice. This tendency is apparent principally in connection with discrimination against Negroes and personal relations with them.[93]

The author also found that education generally decreases racial prejudice. Some of his pertinent findings were (1) Willingness to work with negroes is characteristic of lower and middle, but not upper classes. (2) "The prospect of Negroes as next-door neighbors arouses more opposition among the educated, regardless of occupational status." (3) The lower class were most willing to accept Negroes as neighbors, the middle next, and the upper class the least. (4) Education is most effective for reducing prejudice among the lower classes, least among the upper.[94]

Perhaps the basic implication for education is that the amount of prejudice according to social class needs to be established to a greater degree of certainty than seems to be the case at present. However, there is ample evidence of prejudice which the school needs to combat, and it is believed that the school can do so by exposing the child to experiences related to prejudice. Further research is also needed to determine what experiences are effective for combating prejudice, particularly if its held by the upper class children and adults.

Changing Class Attitudes

Research has revealed several things about changes in attitudes. One is that they change with age and that there are also sex differences in their changing.[95] The indication is that the changes are such as to widen the differences between the various classes.[96] There is also evidence that when a person changes his social class, many of his attitudes change, not just a

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[90] Brookover, Op. Cit., p. 132.

[91] Stember, Charles H. Education and Attitude Change. New York: Institute of Human Relations Press, 1961, pp. 152-176.

[92] Ibid., p. 173.

[94] Ibid., p. 152.

[95] Tuma, Elias and Livson, Norman. "Family Socio-economic Status and Adolescent Attitudes

few.[97] This researcher also found that children whose attitudes had changed from those held by their family reflected more their intelligence level than their family's social class.[98] W. Lloyd Warner also investigated the phenomenon of change and concluded that class solidarity was stronger than race solidarity.[99]

The role of education in changing attitudes has also been the subject of research. Stember, for instance, studied the effects of a college education on the attitudes held in regard to racial prejudice. He found that: (1) "Attitudes...are formed early and remain more or less impervious to college experience." (2) Attitudes seem to be determined more by the status of the family than the educative experience.[100] (3) "The positive effects of education are strongest and most systematic among persons of lower status, rendering them considerably less prejudiced than even the educated of the upper status group. At higher status levels the effects of education diminish and occasionally disappear altogether." (4) "Only where education differentiates the individual sharply from his previous subculture does it appreciably affect his attitude toward minorities."[101] Another study investigated attitudes at the high school level and found that there were some techniques which resulted in changed attitudes. Specifically, this study found that the students increased their number of friends in the direction of upward choices and that the lowest class group showed signs of disintegrating. His conclusion, however, was, "The impressive thing was not the changes in, but the stability of, group structure."[102]

The basic implication for education regarding the changing of attitudes is that the schools can do something to effect at least slight changes if they start early enough. But bringing about changes is a difficult and arduous task, especially at the upper levels of education, and probably especially for the upper classes. It would seem feasible to make an effort to include in the curriculum an evaluation of the attitudes held by the school population and then give the child experiences that would modify those that need changing. Determining which need modifying would be no small task and would require a serious look at the school's philosophy of education. Brookover says that though the school cannot change the social milieu it at least can try to change the attitudes.[103]

Social Mobility and the School

While it is true that classes tend to perpetuate themselves through marriage within the same strata, "According to estimates based on several kinds of data, between 15 and 20 per cent of Americans are upward mobile, at least one class in a five-class system."[104] There is disagreement as to whether mobility is increasing. Havighurst

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[97] Phillips, E. Lakin. "Intellectual and Personality Factors Associated with Social Class Attitudes Among Junior High School Students." Journal of Genetic Psychology, (September, 1950), 77:69.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Warner and Srole, Op. Cit., p. 94.

[100] Stember, Op. Cit., pp. 157-167.

[101] Ibid., p. 174.

[102] Cook, Op. Cit., pp. 326-328.

[103] Brookover, Op. Cit., p. 138.

[104] Havighurst, Op. Cit., p. 361.

maintains that it is increasing and has increased since 1900[105] while Packard builds a strong case for the class lines hardening.[106] The latter also calls attention to downward mobility.

> Any society that has a good deal of upward circulation is bound to have some downward circulation, too. We can't all stay at the high level our elders or we ourselves achieve. The person being declassed is, as previously indicated, almost invariably in an ugly mood. He is seething with humiliation and apprehension. If society has not developed a mechanism for quickly and gently helping him find a new, more humble niche, then he becomes a bigot, a searcher for scapegoats, and an eager recruit for almost any demagogue who promises to set up a completely new social order.[107]

One of the most knowledgeable experts about mobility has asked this trenchant question, "How much should the school urge children to be ambitious and mobile, in a society where most of them will find jobs calling for little skill?"[108] This question cannot be ignored and the answer would probably be that education really has no choice, because, like it or not, the school is a sorting and selecting institution that does much to determine the eventual social class of the students and the amount of mobility of individual students. Although education influences both upward and downward mobility, most authors emphasize its role in upward mobility. It is patently obvious that upward mobility is the concern, even the prerogative, of the lower classes who commonly view education as the vehicle to take them to a higher class. There is common agreement among sociologists that high school education is not enough; college attendance is usually required to gain much in the social scale.[109] However, there is a pitfall which should be remembered by the counsellor who encourages the successful lower class students to go to college. If going is not possible, the students find that their success does not mean much in the working world, so may feel worse than if they had never aspired to something better.[110]

If the American dream of social mobility (where the poor boy makes good) is to be realized, education must play an important, even vital, part. This means that education is forced into a role of determining mobility. It seems that though the schools are recognizing this and are making a sincere and dedicated effort to recognize those students with potential and to see that they have a chance to realize their potential, greater efforts in guidance and curriculum planning are needed, and that revolutionary changes are needed in the area of financial assistance so that more lower class students can "make good."

It would seem that the schools also need to be aware of those who are potentially downwardly mobile and to do what they can to make the change easy, or maybe unnecessary. This would mean recognizing such students, then giving them the benefit of guidance and curriculum offerings which would ease their adjustment. It also seems realistic that the schools should not encourage everyone to move upward, as this is impossible

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[105] Havighurst and Neugarten, Op. Cit., p. 43.

[106] Packard, Op. Cit., pp. 2 and 6, distinguishes between the increased mobility because material goods are more available to all classes, and the decreased mobility because vocational advancement is less possible than in the past. He concludes that the latter is more important than the former.

[107] Ibid., p. 288-289.

[108] Quoted in: Ibid., p. 288.

[109] Brookover, Op. Cit., p. 116.

and may lead to worse frustration than simply maintaining the status quo. There is even the possibility that, in the individual case, the school might discourage some from trying to ascend farther than their position and abilities indicate possible.

Conclusions

The schools can and should play a vital role in bridging the gap between what society is and what it wants to be, between the ideal and the real. To do this, education must be like a mirror that not only reflects what it sees, but also can focus what it sees to light up the dark places.

It is recognized that education is an institution of major importance in determining which run of the social ladder the youngster is currently occupying and which one he will eventually stand on as an adult.

A quotation from Packard provides a fitting closing statement:

> Status distinctions would appear to be inevitable in a society as complicated as our own. The problem is not to try to wipe them out--which would be impossible--but to achieve a reasonably happy society within their frameword. If we accept that context, much can be done to promote contentment, mutual respect, and life satisfaction.
>
> There appear to be two principle approaches. One is to promote more understanding between people of the various class groupings in our society. The other is to make class distinctions less burdensome by making certain that people of real talent are discovered and encouraged to fulfill their potential regardless of their station in life.[111]

Education can do both of these. It is hoped that it will before the "social dynamite" recognized by Conant and others explodes and destroys many people--and maybe an entire society.

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[111] Packard, Op. Cit., p. 291.

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